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House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 23, 2002, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) for 5 minutes.

PROVIDING PERMANENT TAX CUTS

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor today to draw attention to an issue that so many in this House have worked on over the last several years and that is an issue of fairness.

Over the last several years we have asked a basic question. Is it right, is it fair, that under our tax code a married working couple, where both the husband and wife are in the workforce, pay higher taxes than if they chose not to get married? That is an issue I was so pleased and when this House under the gentleman from Illinois' (Mr. HASTERT) leadership and with the leadership of the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) of the Ways and Means Committee, that we succeeded as part of what is now known as the Bush tax cut, succeeded in passing legislation which eliminated the marriage tax penalty for almost 43 million married working couples who on average paid \$1,700 more in higher taxes.

Let me give my colleagues an example of a married couple from Joliet, Illinois. This is Jose and Magdalena Castillo. They are laborers in Joliet, Il-

linois. They have a combined income of about \$85,000. Their marriage tax penalty prior to the Bush tax cut was about \$1,125 that Jose and Magdalena paid in higher taxes just because they are married. I also want to introduce their children, Eduardo and Carolina Castillo, and their benefit of the Bush tax cut from the doubling of the \$500 per child tax credit as well. Of course, that was \$500. We raised that to \$1,000.

Here is the issue. Unfortunately, there are some arcane rules over in the other body which may require that the Bush tax cut sunset in the year 2011. What that means is in a few years, elimination of the marriage tax penalty and the \$1,000 per child tax credit that the Castillo family benefits from will be eliminated, which means that their taxes will go up. Taxes go up \$1,000 per child, as well as at least \$1,125 a year when the marriage tax penalty elimination expires.

We had a very, very important vote, an important vote that was important for families like Jose and Magdalena Castillo on this House floor 2 weeks ago, and that vote was on making the Bush tax cut permanent. What that vote was all about was whether or not to impose a tax increase on over 100 million American taxpayers who benefit from the Bush tax cut, because if we fail to make the Bush tax cut permanent, which lowered rates for all taxpayers, which provided opportunities to set aside more in an IRA and a 401(k) and an education savings account, eliminated the marriage tax penalty for 43 million company couples like Jose and Magdalena Castillo, and also wiped out the death tax so we can keep the family farm and the family business in the family and in business when the founder passes on.

Unfortunately, as I said earlier, it is going to expire, and unfortunately, our friends on the other side of the aisle overwhelmingly on the Democratic side voted to increase taxes by oppos-

ing efforts to make permanent the Bush tax cut. That is why I think it is very, very important that we put a human face on those who would suffer and be hurt by Democratic efforts to raise taxes once again, by either suspending, eliminating or preventing the permanency of what we now call as the Bush tax cut.

As I said earlier, there are 43 million couples like Jose and Magdalena Castillo who benefit from the marriage tax penalty relief in the Bush tax cut, and in this case, Jose and Magdalena also benefit from \$1,000 per child tax credit which helps families with children. They would also lose that if we fail to make the Bush tax cut permanent.

It is often said, and those who argue against cutting taxes always say, that if someone pays taxes they are rich. We know that over 100 million Americans benefit from the Bush tax cut. Some of those who really truly benefited are 3.9 million Americans who no longer pay Federal income taxes because of the Bush tax cut that we moved through this House of Representatives, thanks to the leadership of the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT), and if the Democrats succeed in rescinding or repealing or preventing the permanency of the Bush tax cut, 3.9 million Americans, including 3 million Americans with children, will once again be placed back on the tax rolls. Voting against permanency of the Bush tax cut is a tax increase.

Let me go back to the issue which I first raised at the beginning of my remarks, and that is the whole issue of fairness. The tax code is complicated, and prior to the Bush tax cut, the complications of our Federal income tax forced 43 million Americans like Jose and Magdalena Castillo to pay higher taxes just because they are married.

What caused that is Jose and Magdalena are each in the workforce, they each work as laborers, and when

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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